

# Highway Safety and Active Transportation

Lakes Region  
Planning Commission  
TAC meeting  
June 4, 2025



# Driving Toward Zero

**“Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”**

*Albert Einstein*

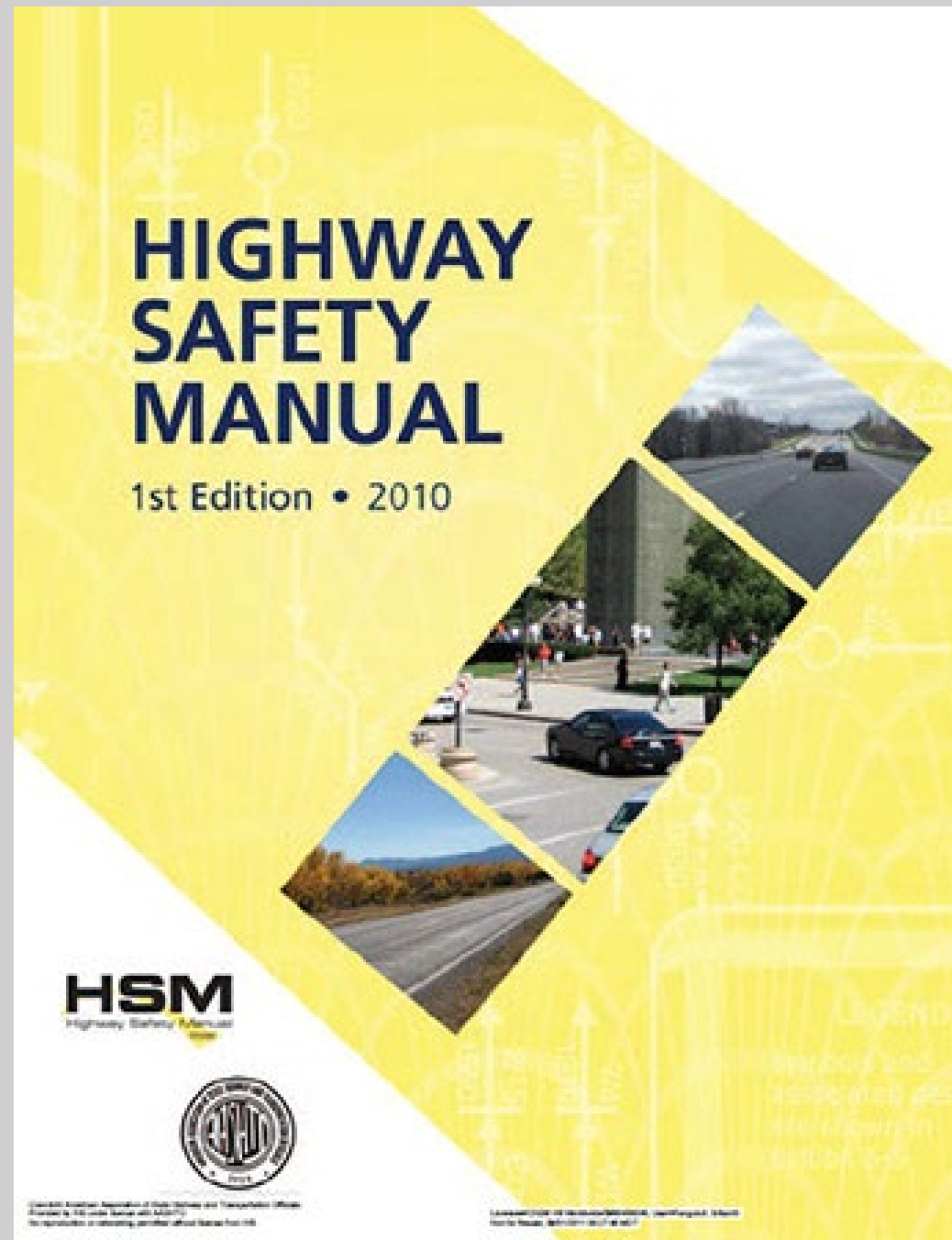
# Agenda

- Overview of New Hampshire Highway Safety/Active Transportation
  - Highway Safety/Active Transportation
    - Project delivery
    - Program management
  - Plans and programs
    - Safe System Approach
    - Strategic Highway Safety Plan
    - Active Transportation
    - Road Safety Audits
    - Resurrecting Driving Toward Zero (DTZ)
- Challenges/ opportunities

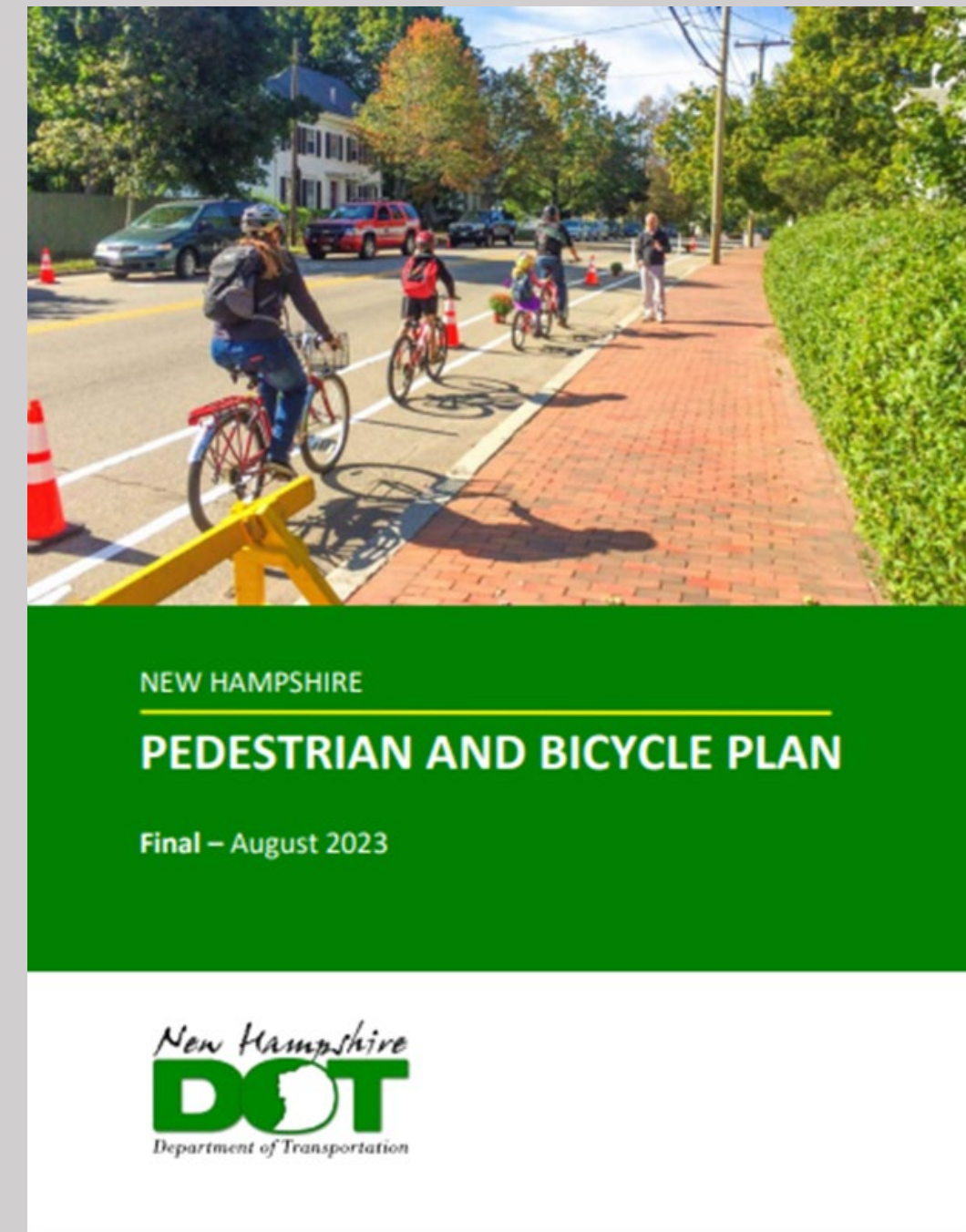


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# Highway Safety/Active Transportation



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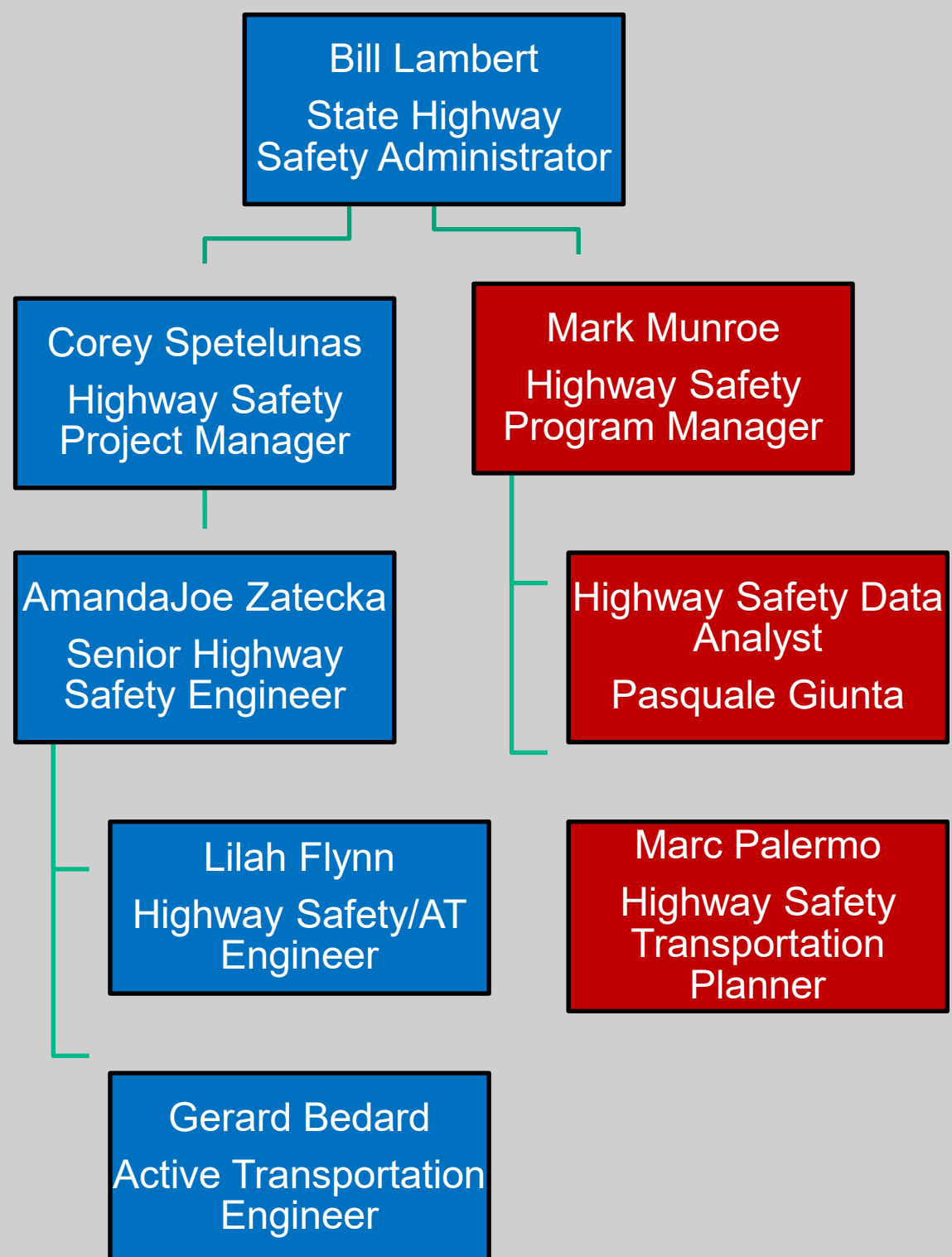


# Highway Safety/Active Transportation

- NHDOT staff
  - Bill Lambert, Highway Safety/Active Transportation Administrator
  - Project Delivery
    - Corey Spetelunas, Highway Safety Project Manager
    - Amanda Joe Zatecka, Senior Highway Safety Engineer
    - Gerry Bedard, Active Transportation Engineer
    - Lilah Flynn, Highway Safety Engineer
  - Program Management
    - Mark Munroe, Highway Safety Program Manager
    - Pasquale Giunta, Highway Safety Data Analyst
    - Marc Palermo, Highway Safety Transportation Planner (begins 8/23/2024)

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# Highway Safety/Active Transportation



- Purpose of 2023 reorganization:
  - Highway Safety and Active Transportation elevated to report to Assistant Commissioner
  - Traditional Civil Engineering positions reclassified to “program management” classifications
    - Allows engineers to focus on project delivery
    - Provides resources to manage SHSP, HSIP Implementation, VRUA, and other plans
    - Opportunity to improve collaboration with safety partners

# Evolution of highway safety at NHDOT

- Prior to 2007
  - Informal process to review safety concerns
    - Safety Surveillance Team, Regional Safety Conferences
- 2007 to 2017 (Federal HSIP)
  - Dedicated State Highway Safety Engineer position
  - Introduced network screening (Safety Analyst)
- 2017 to present
  - Combined Highway Safety and Active Transportation

# Evolution of highway safety at NHDOT

- HSIP Committee
  - Oversight of Highway Safety Improvement Program
  - Approves and prioritizes HSIP projects
    - Systemic (guardrail, pavement marking, curve signing, etc.)
    - Site specific (intersections, highway segments, etc.)
  - Led by NHDOT Assistant Director of Project Development
    - Includes HS/AT staff, Highway Design, Highway Maintenance, Traffic, Planning and Community Assistance
    - External stakeholders include MPO, RPC, large municipality, and small municipality

# Safe System Approach



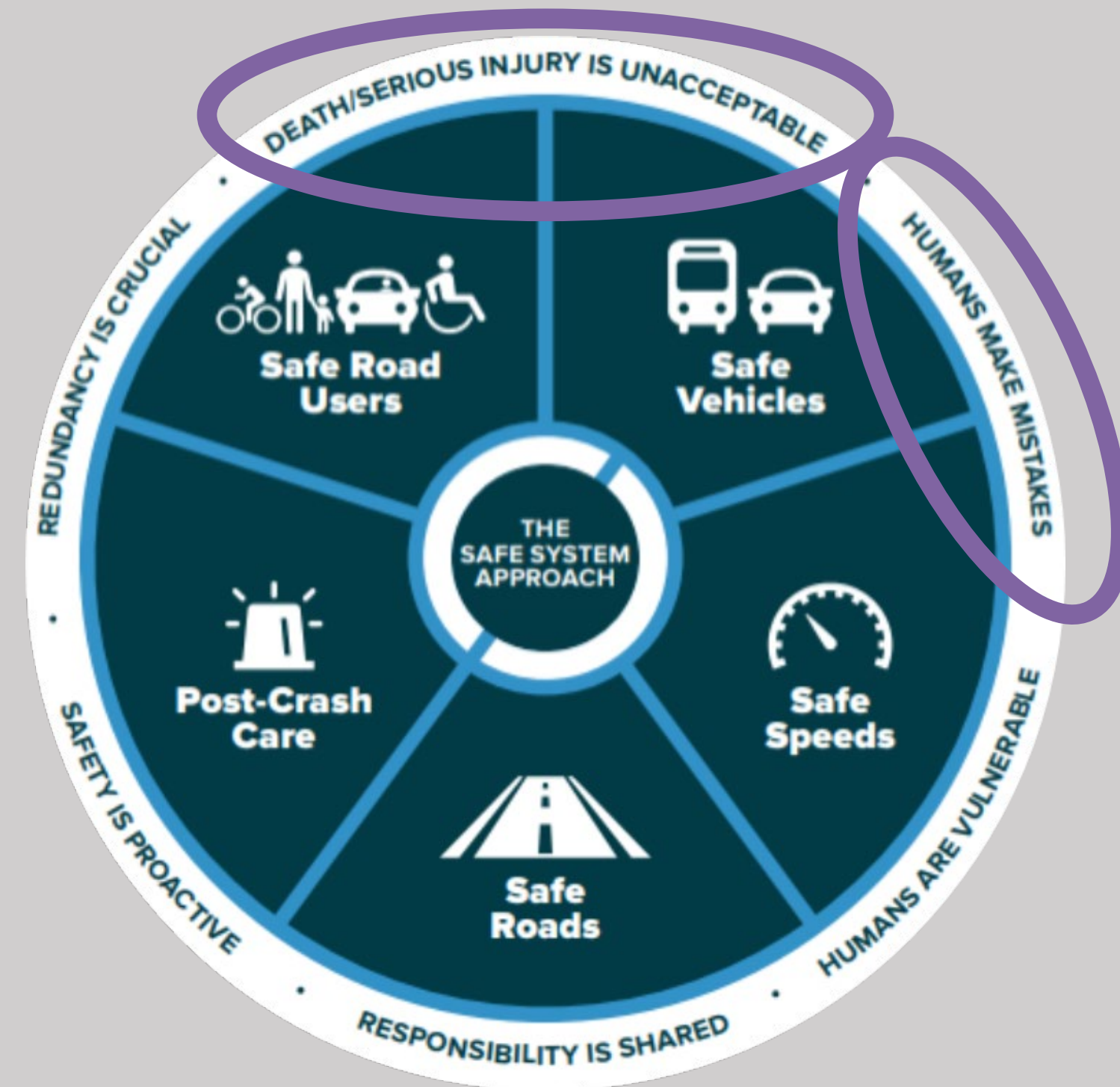
# Safe System Approach

- Holistic highway safety approach
  - Originated in Europe
  - Adopted by USDOT through the 2022 National Roadway Safety Strategy
  - Guided by six (or seven) principles
  - Incorporates five specific elements
    - NHDOT focus on “safe roads”, “safe road users” and “safe speeds”



# Safe System Approach

- Death/Serious Injury is Unacceptable
  - This is the basic premise of any highway safety program, especially as the number fatal crashes has plateaued
- Humans Make Mistakes
  - We can no longer design, operate, and maintain highways with the presumption that road users are “reasonable and safe”



5/10/2024

Safety Day Presentation

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# Safe System Approach

- Safe Roads is generally the DOT's wheelhouse; however...
- Safe Road Users may have the greatest impact to highway safety,
- Hard to understand how a focus on Safe Vehicles does not include governing vehicle speeds,
- Safe Speeds are a subset of road users and vehicles, and to a lesser extent, highway geometry
- Post-Care Care is an indication that there was failure in one of the other elements.



5/10/2024

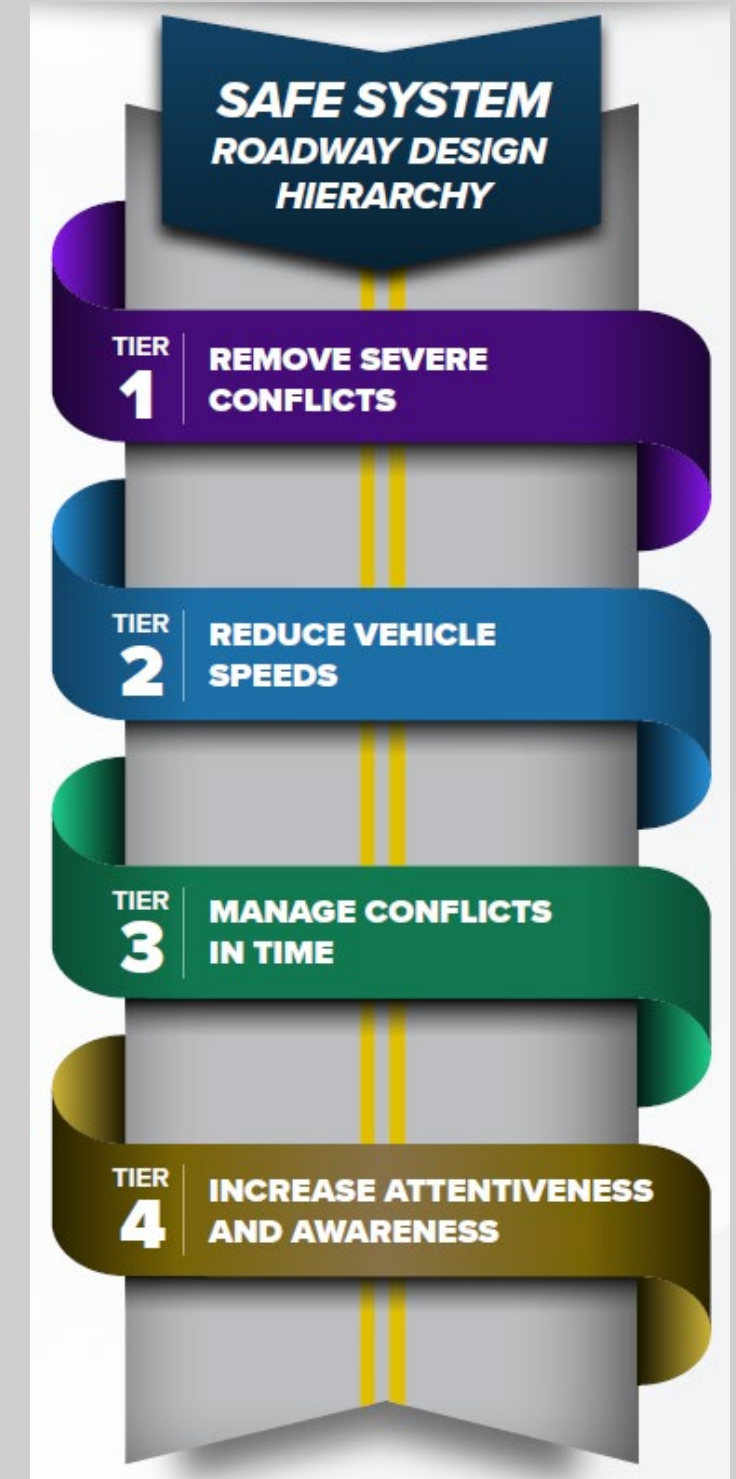
Safety Day Presentation

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# Safe System Approach

- Implementation, examples
  1. Roundabouts, separated bike lanes, median barriers, centerline buffer areas
  2. Gateway treatments, utilize “target speed” in design practice, support effective enforcement
  3. Protected left turn phasing, FYA, Leading pedestrian interval
  4. Enhanced pavement markings, wrong -way driving countermeasures, speed feedback signs

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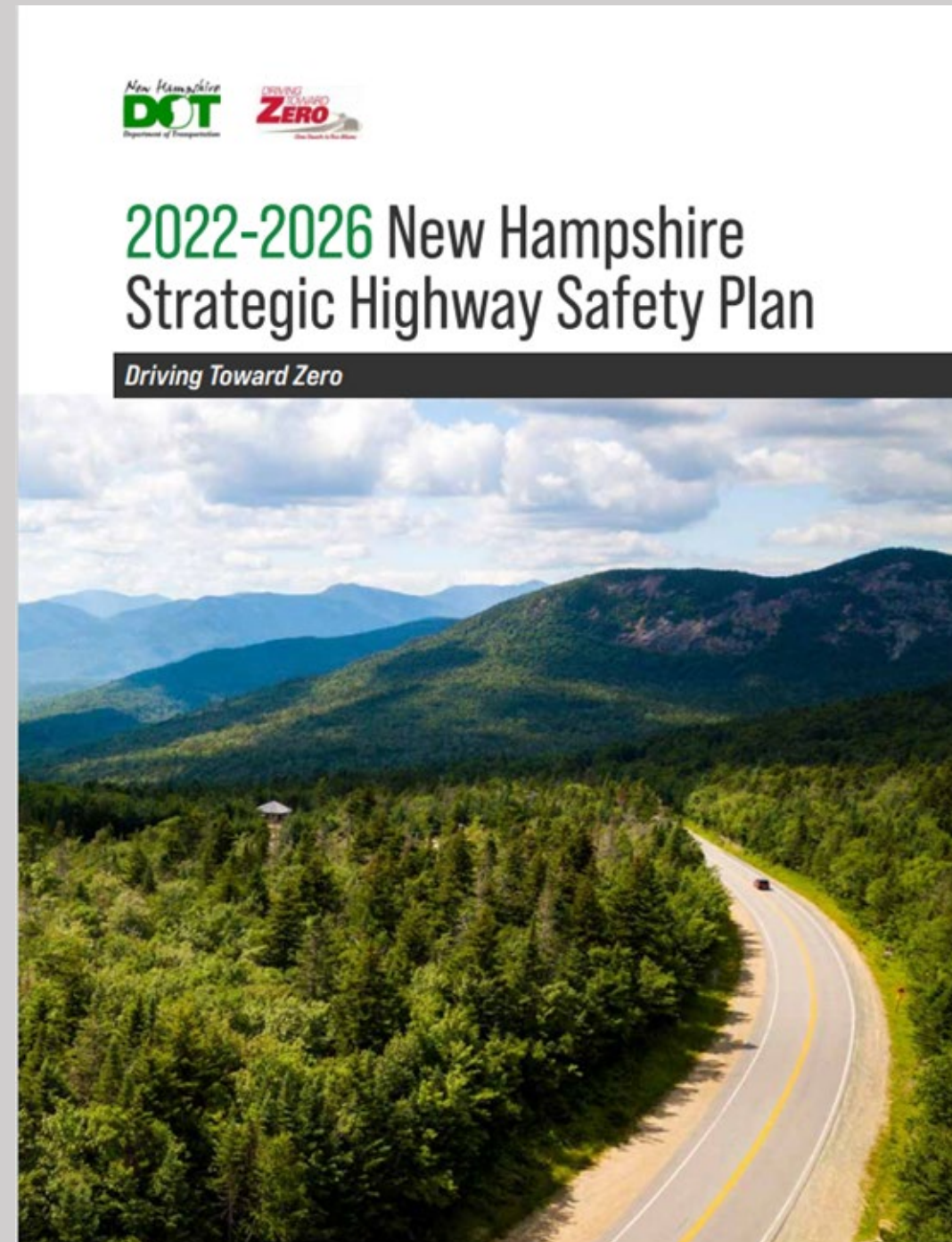


# Implementing SSA in New Hampshire

- All-way stop control at rural intersections
  - Locations that do not meet traffic volume warrants for traffic signal control (or all -way stop control) but where crashes continue to occur.
- Rumble strips
  - Resurrected dormant programmatic program
- Two-way left turn lanes (TWLTL)
- Median barrier
- Wrong way driving countermeasures

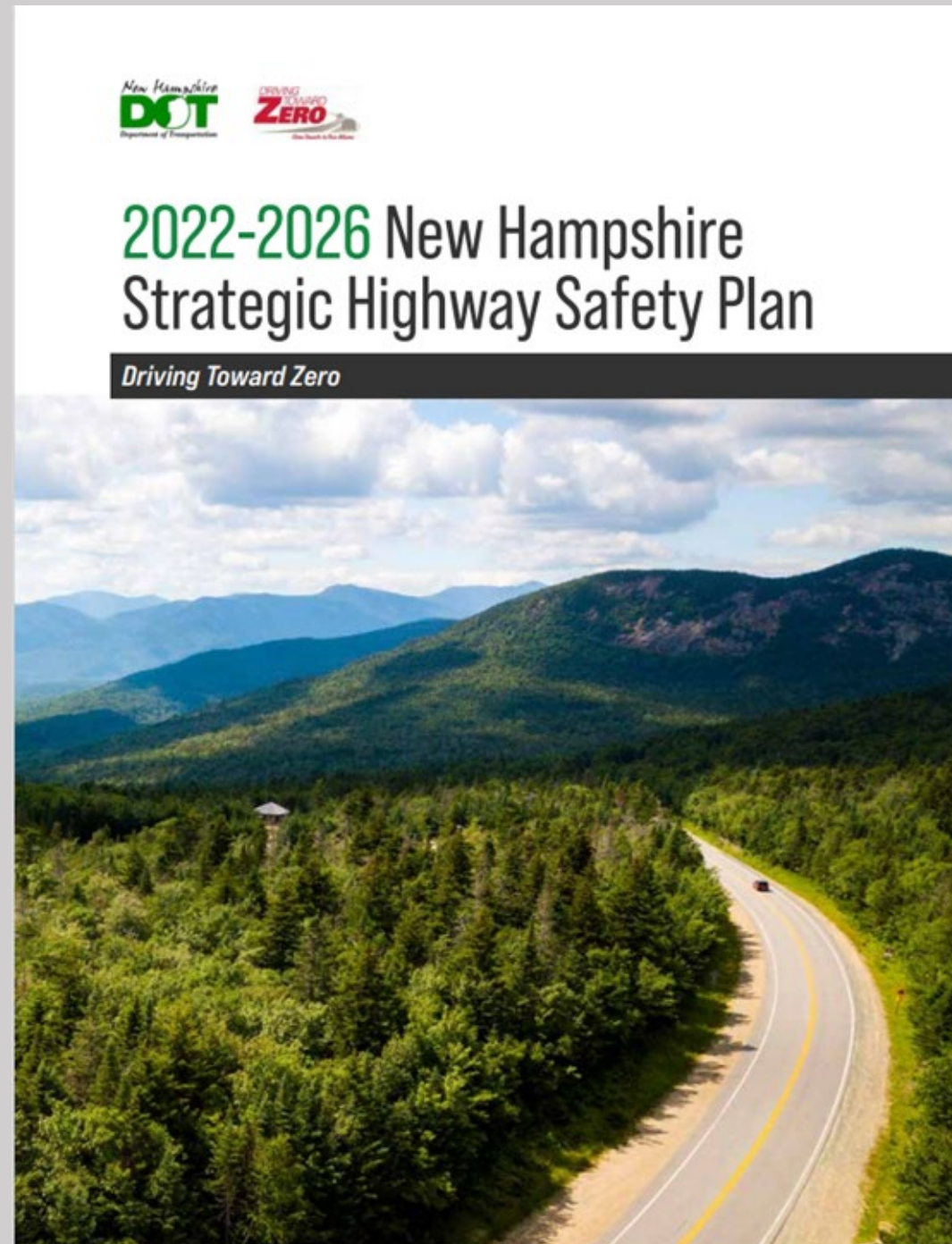
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# Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)



# Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

- SHSP critical emphasis areas:
  - Intersections
  - Roadway departure
  - **Distracted driving**
  - **Impaired driving**
  - **Speed and aggressive driving**
  - Vehicle occupant protection
  - Older drivers
  - Teen traffic safety
  - VRU-motorized
  - VRU-non-motorized



## Vision

Through a comprehensive, systematic approach we will use data-driven methods to select and implement appropriate countermeasures that will reduce crashes on all New Hampshire roads.

## Mission

Foster and sustain collaboration among private and public stakeholders, in the implementation of education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical services (EMS) strategies, to create a safety culture where one death on a New Hampshire roadway is too many.

## Goal

Reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2035, working toward 0 by 2050.

# Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

- Beginning process to update for 2027
  - Vulnerable Road User Assessment to be included
  - Considering means to encourage ongoing stakeholder engagement
    - Emphasis area sub-committees
    - Driving Toward Zero outreach
    - Highway Fatalities Summit

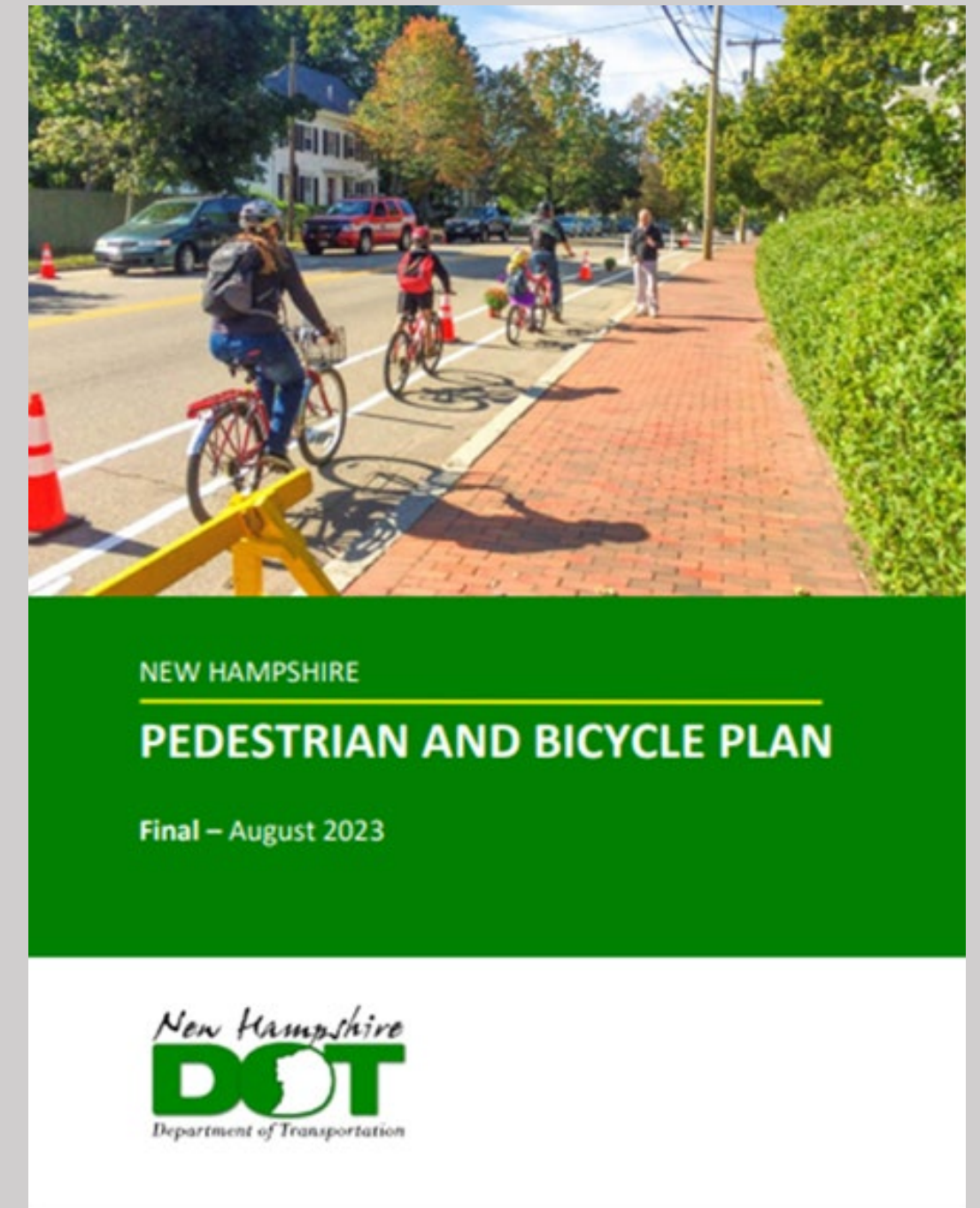
# Active Transportation



# Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan - 2023

“New Hampshire’s natural beauty and small-town charm make it a great place to walk and bike. **Walking and biking also have economic, environmental, and health benefits, which means that investing in active transportation is investing in our state’s people.**”

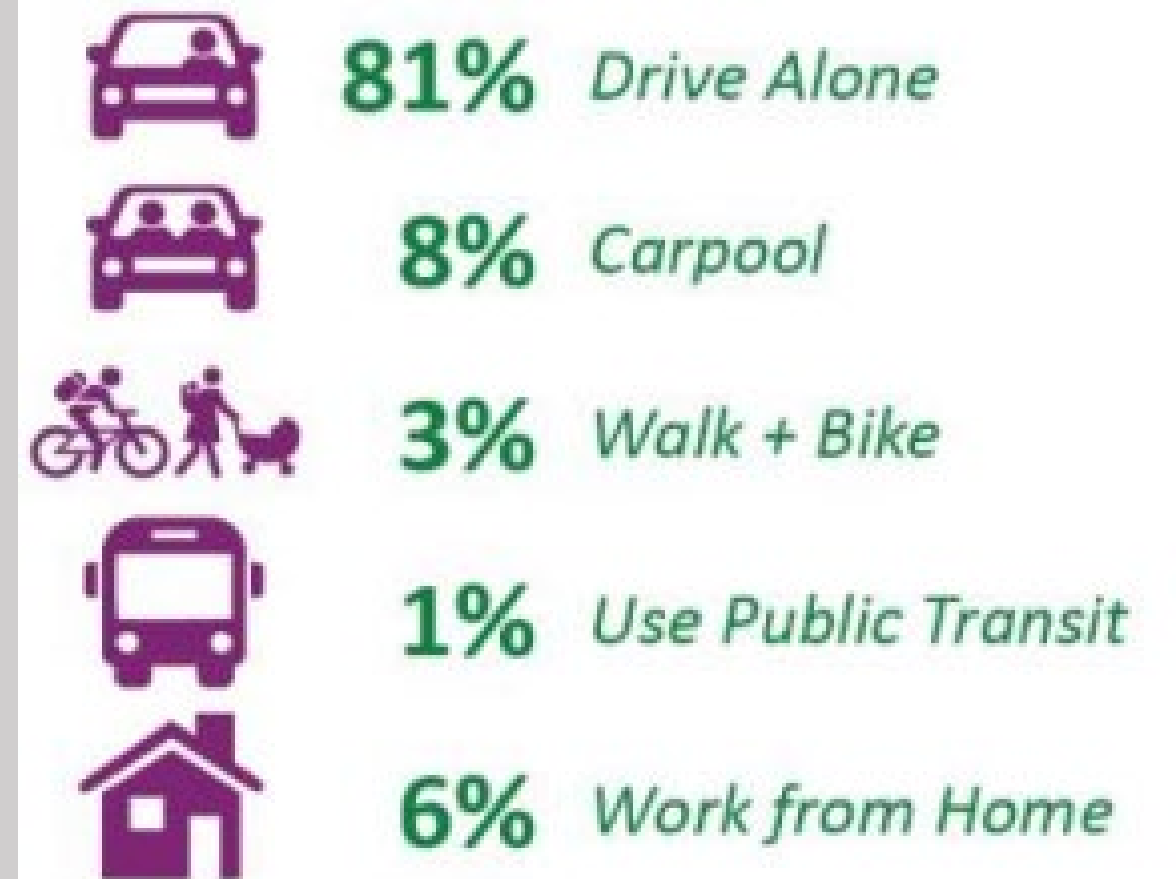
-Bill Cass, NHDOT Commissioner



# Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan - 2023

- Includes full chapter on “Complete Streets” practices
- Key action items
  - Updated staff (and partner) training
  - Data acquisition for shoulder widths and other MIRE elements
  - Develop relevant design guidance
  - Develop more specific performance measures
  - Improve ped/bike volume data collection
  - Pursue new programmatic funding dedicated to non-motorized modes<sup>29</sup>

## Commute to Work Mode Share (Pre-Covid)

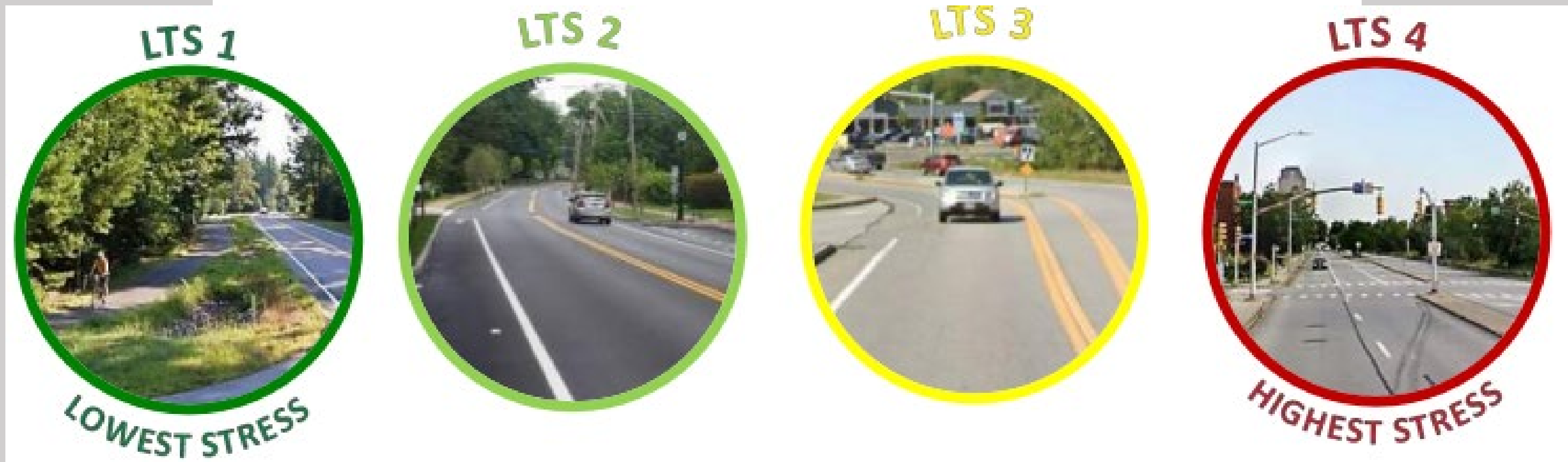


Source: ACS 5-year data (2012-2016)

# Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan – 2023

## Level of Stress

LTS 1 (Lowest Stress)	LTS 2	LTS 3	LTS 4 (Highest Stress)
<b>3 miles</b> ( <i>&lt;1% of existing roads</i> )	<b>902 miles</b> ( <i>19% of existing roads</i> )	<b>2128 miles</b> ( <i>45% of existing roads</i> )	<b>1076 miles</b> ( <i>23% of existing roads</i> )



miles.

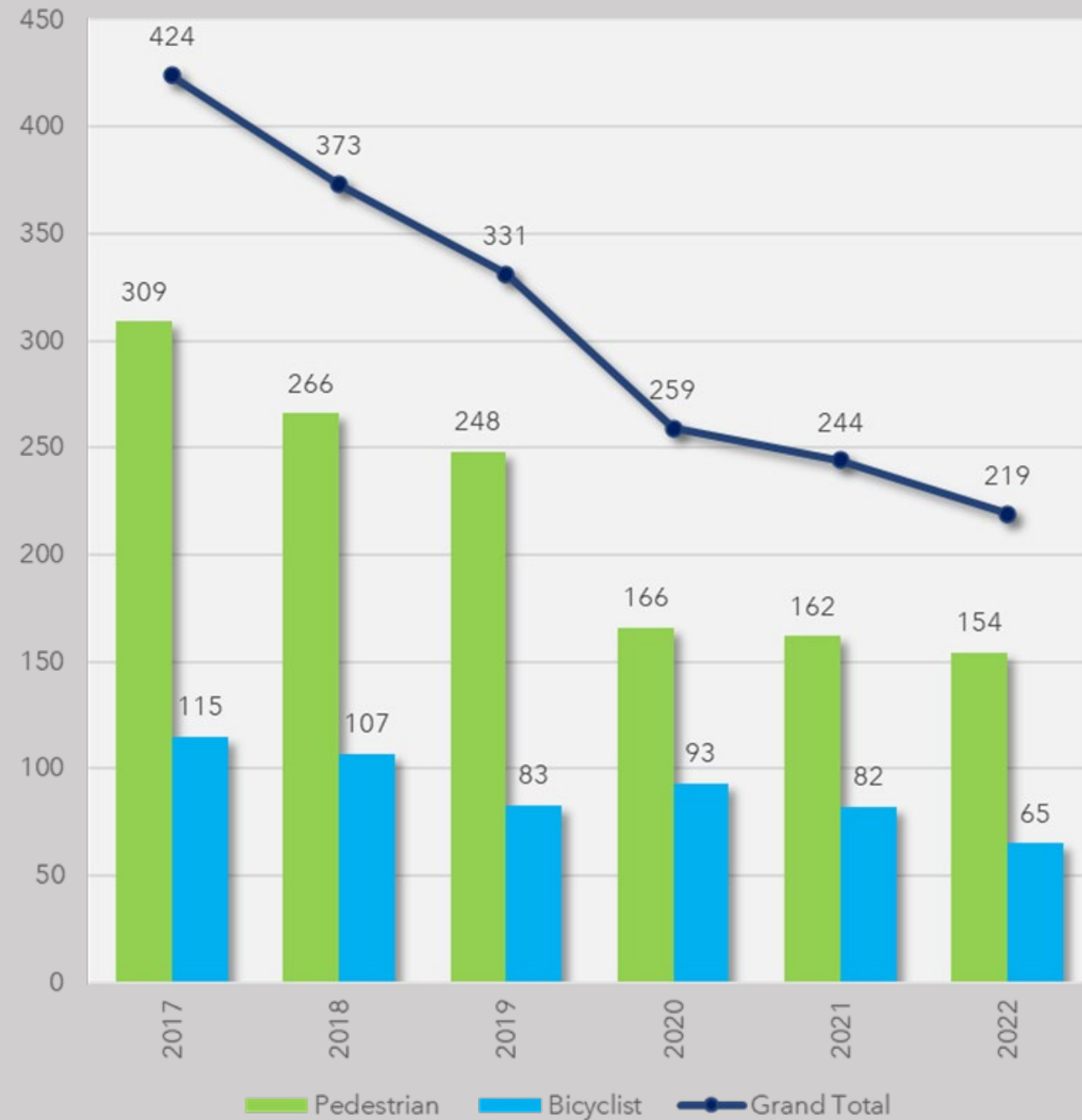
# Vulnerable Road User Assessment – 2023

- 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- **Data-driven process to identify areas of high -risk for vulnerable road users** . Specifically, the State must perform a quantitative analysis of VRU fatalities and serious injuries.
- **Consult with local governments, MPOs, and regional transportation planning organizations that represent high -risk areas.**
- **Develop program of projects/strategies** to reduce safety risks to vulnerable road users in areas identified as high-risk
- **Consider Safe System Approach**
- **Delivered to FHWA November 15, 2023**

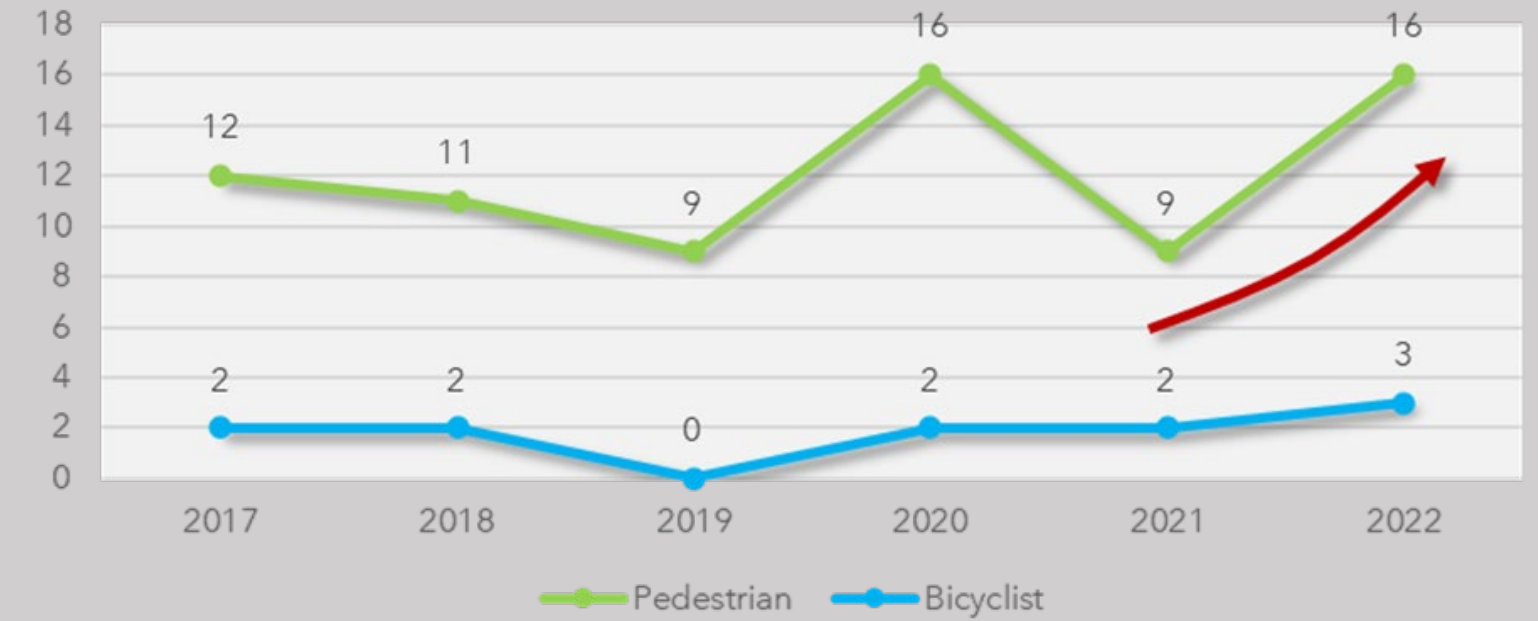
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# Vulnerable Road User Assessment 2017 - 2022

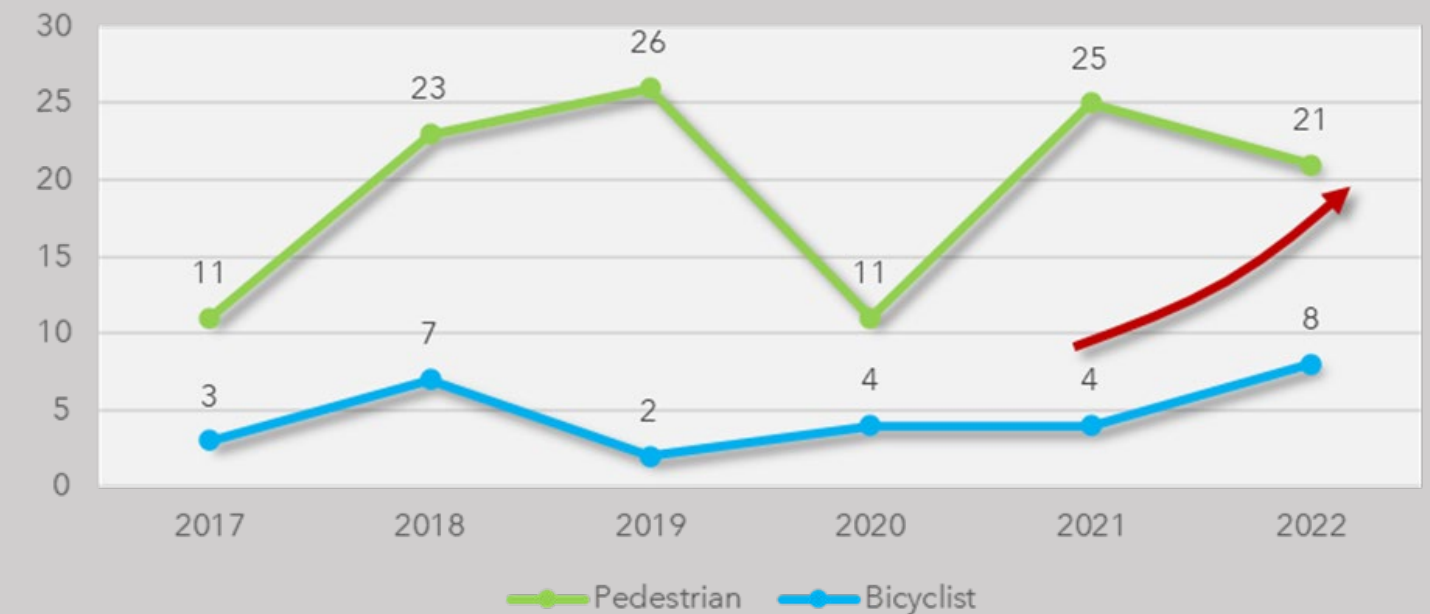
Non-Motorist Crashes



Non-Motorist Fatalities



Non-Motorist Suspected Serious Injuries



# Complete Streets



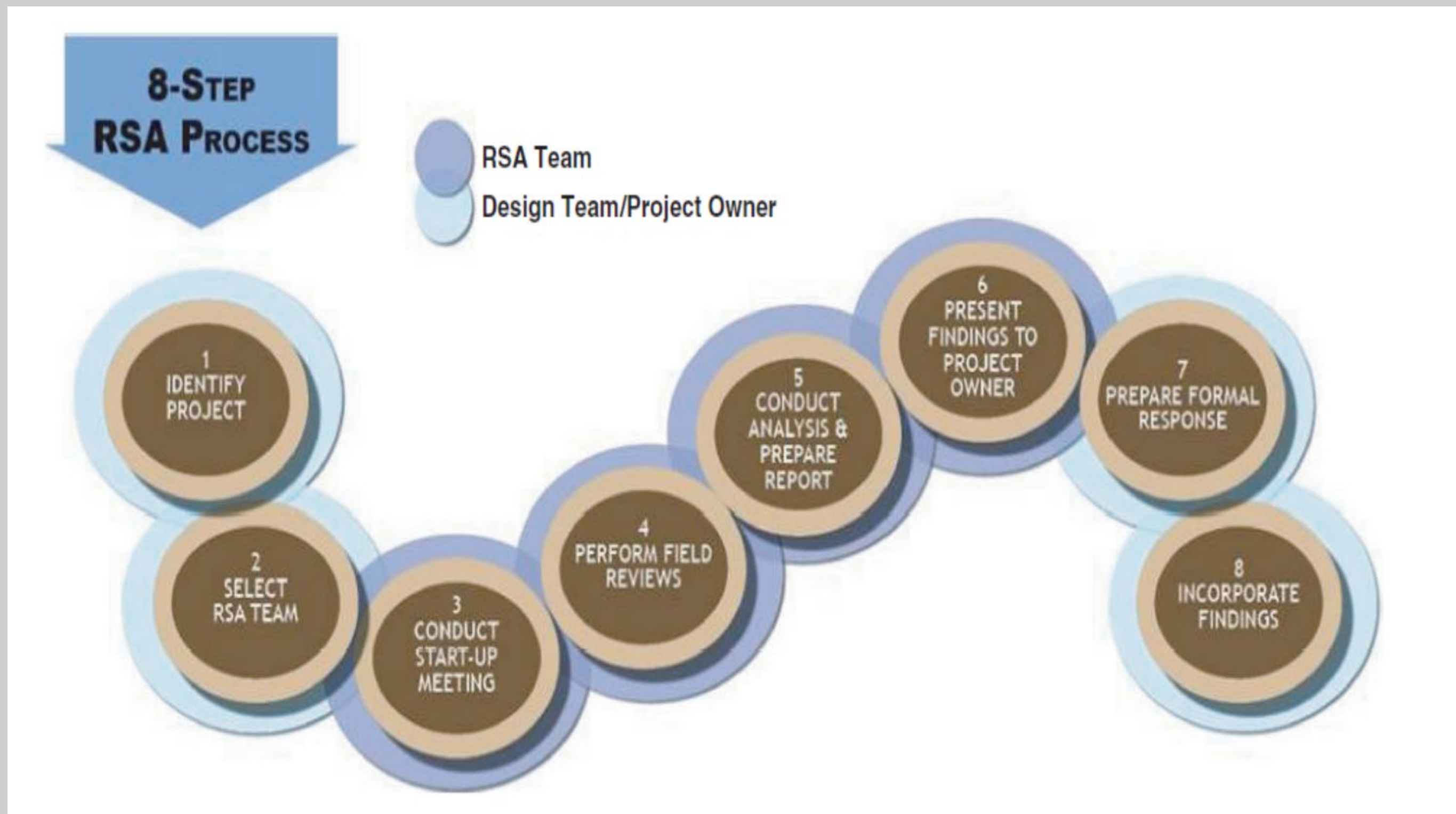
# Complete Streets Policy

- **POLICY STATEMENT** (draft)
- Per RSA 21-L:2, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) shall be responsible for planning, developing, and maintaining a state transportation network to provide for safe and convenient movement of people and goods throughout the state. This network of highways, railroads, air service, mass transit, and other practicable modes of transportation, supports state growth and economic development and promotes the general welfare of the citizens of the state. **This policy refines the statutory responsibility to assure the safety of all modes and road users, including vulnerable road users.**

# Complete Streets Policy

- Other highlights
  - Focus on “Target Speed”
  - Recognize that roads that are safer for non-motorized users are inherently safer for all road users
  - Implementation will include an exception process that recognizes complete streets should be the rule, not the exception
  - Implementation will also include discussion of maintenance responsibilities for specific complete street elements
  - Training and communication will be critical to implementation

# Road Safety Audits (RSAs)



# Road Safety Audits (RSAs)

1. Applications submitted by towns/cities in collaboration with planning commissions, locations prioritized and selected based on data
2. Multi-disciplinary team evaluation of specific safety concern and development of short-, intermediate-, and long-term safety countermeasures
3. Includes “table-top” discussion and field observation
4. Helps to identify and prioritize short, intermediate, and long term countermeasures, including projects funded through Highway Safety Improvement Program

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# Resurrecting DTZ

- Resurrecting Driving Toward Zero
  - Program initially modelled after Toward Zero Deaths (or Target Zero)
  - Went dormant after 2017
  - Focus on education and outreach
    - Deerfield Fair
    - High Schools
    - Highway Fatality Summit
- Now includes “Slow and Steady, It’s not a Race” and “Buckle Up/Phone Down”

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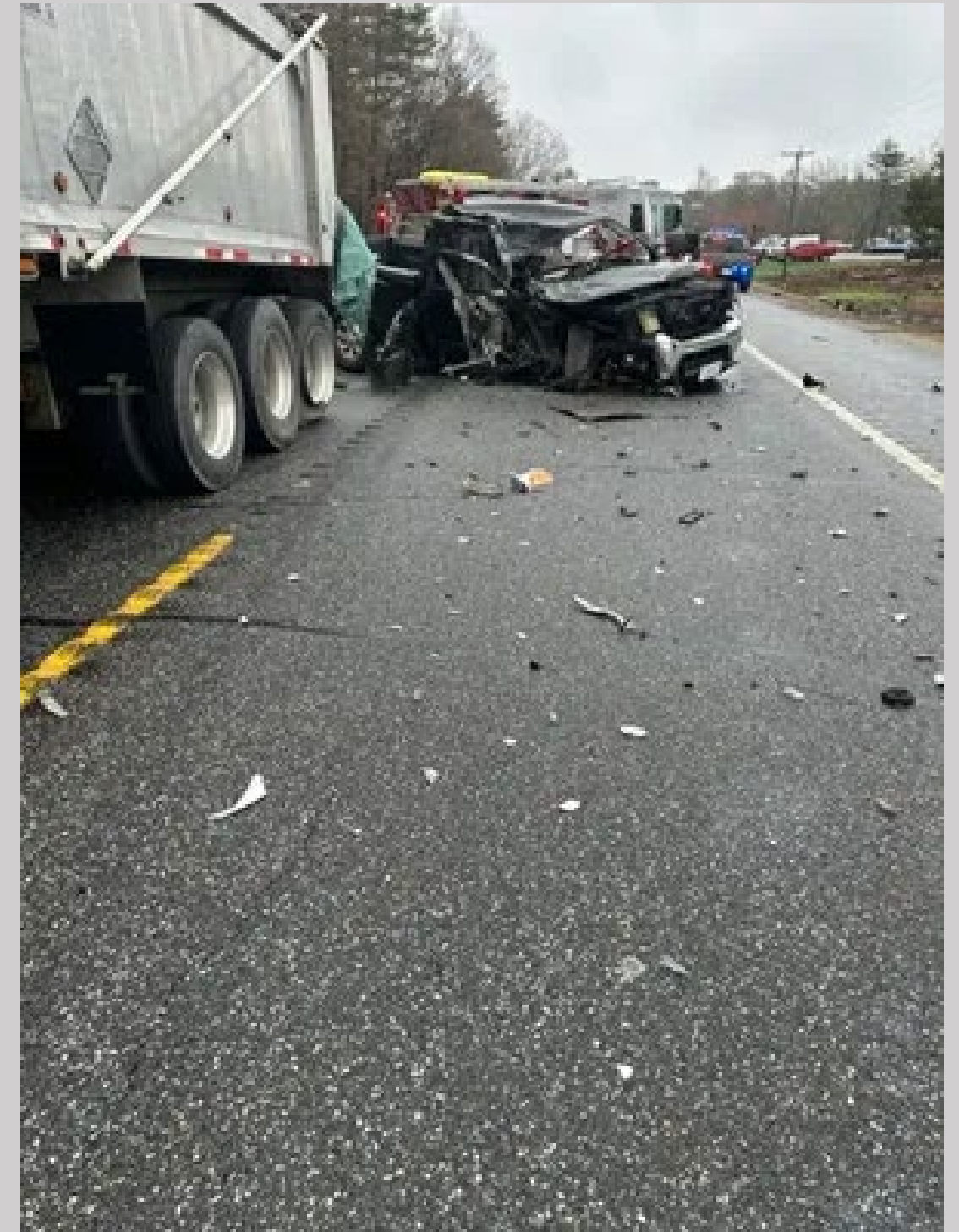
# Highway Safety Improvement Projects

- Response to unanticipated concerns
  - Median barrier installation
  - Wrong way driver action plan and pilot project
- Programmatic
  - Statewide guardrail
  - Road Safety Audits
- Systemic
  - Statewide rumble strips
  - Durable pavement markings
  - All-way stop control for rural intersections
- Site specific
  - Ossipee, NH 28 at NH 171 (representative site-specific safety improvement)
- Non-infrastructure projects
  - Crash data portal and analytics
  - Driving Toward Zero outreach
  - Plans and strategies
    - Strategic Highway Safety Plan

# Highway Safety/Active Transportation Challenges

- Driver behavior(s)
- Overcoming years of “car first” highway design, construction, maintenance, and operation
- Data
  - Pedestrian and bicycle volumes
  - Crash data quantity and quality
  - Inventory data for network screening
- Reaching consensus
- Resources versus demand

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# Highway Safety/Active Transportation Opportunities

- Adoption (and implementation) of a Complete Streets Policy
- Collaboration with law enforcement and other highway safety partners
- Big data and Artificial Intelligence
- Dedicated funding through IIJA/BIL
- Innovative design and design alternatives
  - Intersection control (2-way to All-way STOP control)
  - Roundabouts versus traffic signal control<sub>41</sub>
  - Consideration of lesser traffic level of service during peak periods

# Questions?

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